

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6855

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1642

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1433 AND 1485

BEGIN SUMMARY. MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO CONSOLIDATED HIS COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE FORMAL MECHANISM OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AS A RESULT OF THE APRIL 1-6 CONVENTION. THE OPPOSITION FORCES OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT LED BY CARLOS ROBERTO REINA AND JORGE BUESO ARIAS STAGED A WALKOUT AS A PROTEST AGAINST RODAS' CONVENTION METHODS AND HAVE DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN PARTY ACTIVITIES. IN EFFECT, THE LIBERAL PARTY IS PRESENTLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE RIGHTIST FOLLOWERS OF RODAS AND THE MORE MODERATE WING OF THE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LIBERAL CONVENTION ENDED IN A FLURY OF ACTIVITY DURING THE EARLY MORNING OF APRIL 6. THE RESULTS OF THE CONVENTION SHOWED THAT THE FORCES OF MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO CONTROLLED THE CONVENTION EVEN THOUGH THE "DEMOCRATIC LEFT" FORCES OF CARLOS ROBERTO REINA IDIAQUEZ AND JORGE
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BUESO ARIAS HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO WIN. THE TENDENCY OF

RODISTA DOMINANCE BECAME APPARENT IN EARLY VOTING AND WAS FINALLY CONFIRMED BY THE FINAL ACTIONS OF CONVENTION IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS.

2. THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT LEADERSHIP WAS CONFIDENT OF VICTORY BECUASE THEY HAD WON A MAJORITY OF THE DEPARTMENTAL ELECTIONS AND THUS EXPECTED THOSE RESULTS TO BE REFLECTED IN CONVENTION VOTING. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF DELEGATES SELECTED BY SOME DEPARTMENTAL COUNSELS VOTED FOR RODAS EVEN THOUGH THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT HAD WON THE ELECTIONS FOR THOSE COUNCILS. REINA CLAIMS THAT AT LEAST TEN DELEGATES WERE BRIBED BY THE RODAS FORCES, A CLAIM IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVE OR DISPROVE. REINA ALSO ADMITTED TO AN EMBOFF THAT THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT HAD BEEN TOO SANGUINE ABOUT DELEGATE STRENGTH AND HAD NEGLECTED TO MAINTAIN A DISCIPLINED VOTING BLOC.

3. THE RODISTA FORCES ACCEPTED THE SET OF DRAFT STATUTES PROPOSED BY THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT WHICH CODIFIED THE INTERNAL WORKINGS OF THE PARTY. BASICALLY, THE STATUTES DELINEATE THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE AND THE DEPARTMENTAL ASSEMBLIES AND COUNCILS. HOWEVER, WHEN VOTING ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND NATIONAL DIRECTORATE TOOK PLACE ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 5 THE RODISTA FORCES DECIDED TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT FROM BOTH BODIES AND FILL THE POSITIONS WITH RODAS PARTISANS. REINA AND BUESO CONDEMNED THE TACTIC AS BOTH ARBITRARY AND SHORT-SIGHTED, AND LED A WALKOUT OF THEIR FOLLOWERS. THE RODISTAS REFUSED TO ALTER THEIR POSITION AND PROCEEDED TO ELECT THE COMMITTEE AND DIRECTORATE FROM THEIR OWN RANKS.

4. THE NEW RODISTA-DOMINATED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ITS FIRST MEETING ON APRIL 19 TO ESTABLISH A PLAN OF ACTION. THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT GROUP HAS BEEN MEETING SEPARATELY AND WILL ISSUE A DECLARATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE EXPLAINING THEIR POSITION. REINA TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THEY HAD DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FORMAL PARTY MECHANISM AND WOULD ADOPT A POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO REBUILD THEIR STRENGTH IN THE DEPARTMENTS. REINA REMARKED

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THAT RODAS REPRESENTS THE RETROGRADE RIGHT IN HONDURAS AND HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY COULD RUIN IT.

5. RODAS TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT WOULD EVENTUALLY RECONSIDER ITS POSITION AND PARTICIPATE IN THE PARTY'S ACTIVITIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THEY WOULD BE IMPOTENT POLITICALLY IF THEY ADOPTED AN ATTITUDE OF UNCOOPERATIVENESS. HE EMPHASIZED

THAT THE MAJOR TASK OF THE PARTY IS TO CONFRONT THE
LOPEZ REGIME IN ALL POSSIBLE WAYS, AND CHARACTERIZED THE
PRESENT GOVERNMENT AS ILLEGITIMATE, CONFUSED AND INCOMPETENT.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT RODAS' HARD-LINE
TACTICS IN REFUSING TO ALLOW DEMOCRATIC LEFT MEMBERS TO
BE ELECTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BODIES OF THE PARTY HAS
CAUSED A GREAT DEAL OF RESENTMENT. AS A RESULT IT IS
PROBABLE THAT THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT WILL ADOPT AN INDEPENDENT
STANCE RATHER THAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH RODAS' RIGHTIST
POINT OF VIEW. IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT
WILL ATTEMPT TO CONVOKE ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY
AS SOON AS THEY THINK THEY ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO DOMINATE
THE SITUATION AND REMOVE RODAS FROM CONTROL.
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